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ABSTRACT

This report presents recommendations for providing excellent teachers in all Texas schools. It notes that while state-level policy reforms have helped advance the quality of educator preparation, university-based programs have been unable to produce sufficient numbers of teachers to keep up with the rapidly growing student population. Teacher shortages are a major challenge facing Texas education today. Recommendations are presented for professional partners, including: the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (e.g., provide and coordinate funding from external resources for educational research and policy studies contributing to increased instructional effectiveness); State Board for Educator Certification (e.g., create a systematic teacher induction program); university/community college governing boards and chief executive officers (e.g., articulate the importance of the university's teacher preparation function, reinforcing it as a critical, university-wide mission); university/college deans and faculty (e.g.; actively promote university-wide faculty participation in teacher preparation); public school administrators and teachers (e.g., actively promote teaching as a worthwhile and meaningful profession); education service centers (e.g., collaborate with universities to provide high quality professional development); foundations (e.g., support collaborative planning opportunities between public school and university educators and other stakeholders); and business and organizations (e.g., invest in teacher scholarships and work internship programs for preservice teachers). (SM)

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Excellent Teachers for All Texas Schools:

Proposals for Engaging Educational Stakeholders in Concerted Action

A Report by the
Sid W. Richardson Foundation Forum

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Contents

Foreword v

Sid W. Richardson Foundation Forum vi

Executive Advisory Committee vii

Executive Summary 1

Introduction 3

The Challenge 3

Teacher Shortages 3

Teacher-Preparation Reforms 4

Policy and Program Improvements 5

Legislative Considerations 6

Recommendations for Professional Partners 7

- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board 7
- State Board for Educator Certification 8
- University/Community College Governing Boards and Chief Executive Officers 8
- University/College Deans and Faculty 9
- Public School Administrators and Teachers 9
- Education Service Centers 10
- Foundations 10
- Businesses and Organizations 11

FOREWORD

For more than 10 years, the Sid W. Richardson Foundation has participated extensively in efforts to strengthen public education in Texas through improvement in teacher, principal, and superintendent preparation programs. We believe that every student can learn if he or she is in a classroom with a highly qualified, dedicated teacher in a school with a well-prepared education leader/principal. We are also well aware of the challenge faced by the state and the nation to provide adequate numbers of qualified teachers and principals when many schools open each fall with shortages. In addition, an alarming number of teachers are performing without certification in subjects that they are asked to teach and many are leaving their classroom after only a few years of teaching.

It is for these reasons that the foundation has been urging all universities to make educator preparation a top priority across the university, not only in colleges of education, but also natural sciences, liberal arts, and business. We also have proposed closer coordination of programs among universities, community colleges, education service centers, and schools. We believe a great deal of progress is being made in addressing these challenges, but much remains to be done.

In an effort to assist us in achieving these objectives, the foundation established over a year ago an advisory committee to discuss and make recommendations with respect to educator preparation and the role of all of the players including universities, community colleges, the public schools, the Texas Legislature, state boards, education service centers, the business community, and foundations. The members of the committee have devoted a great deal of time and effort to a series of meetings. Their discussions have led to agreement on many steps that all of those organizations can take to assist in providing excellent teachers for all of our schools. The foundation is pleased to distribute this report of those discussions and recommendations of the committee. We hope that our readers will find the report helpful as they continue their efforts to provide a quality education for every student.

I express my heartfelt thanks to all of the members of the committee for their leadership in addressing our challenge to provide EXCELLENT TEACHERS FOR ALL TEXAS SCHOOLS.

VALLEAU WILKIE, JR.
EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT
SID W. RICHARDSON FOUNDATION

Sid W. Richardson Foundation Forum

The Sid W. Richardson Foundation Forum was founded in October 1990 to provide a venue for leaders from schools, business, government, universities, and foundations to discuss education reform. The forum's initial task force produced the widely disseminated publication, *The Professional Development School*, recognized nationwide as a document of integrity that has had a direct impact on the national move toward development of clinical field-based teacher-preparation programs.

During 1994 the forum commissioned five task forces to consider specific aspects of a system-restructuring process. One task force looked at funding issues, another considered appropriate avenues for technology infusion, a third focused on research and development, and the fourth reviewed current practices in administrator-preparation programs throughout Texas. The latter task force's work resulted in *Principals for the Schools of Texas: A Commonsense Approach to Improving Education*, which was authored by David A. Erlandson, Ed.D., professor of education at Texas A&M University.

The fifth task force was assigned to critically look at how higher-education institutions reward faculty in tenure and promotion practices across institutional lines. *Restructuring the University Reward System* was the resulting report.

In 1999 the forum organized an executive advisory committee to develop recommendations to provide excellent teachers for all Texas schools. The committee's recommendations are presented in this report.

Sid W. Richardson Foundation Forum
Executive Advisory Committee

Excellent Teachers for All Texas Schools:
Proposals for Engaging Educational Stakeholders in Concerted Action

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Executive Summary

Teacher education has come a long way in Texas, but there are some tough challenges ahead. This is the view suggested by *Excellent Teachers for All Texas Schools: Proposals for Engaging Educational Stakeholders in Concerted Action.* The report, issued by the Executive Advisory Committee of the Sid W. Richardson Foundation Forum, points to rising student test scores and narrowing achievement gaps among African-American, Hispanic, and White students as evidence of improved quality of teachers prepared for Texas schools.

Much of the progress that universities have made in preparing teachers can be attributed to the state-level policy reforms begun in 1986, when the Texas Legislature instituted certification examinations for new teachers, requiring them to demonstrate proficiency in both content knowledge and pedagogical skills. In 1987 Texas became the first state to eliminate the undergraduate education degree, establishing teacher preparation a university-wide responsibility. The Legislature followed in 1991 by providing funding for professional development centers within colleges of education that would deliver field-based training in partnership with school districts. More recently in 1995, the state again took the national lead in creating a performance-based accountability system for its educator-preparation programs.

While these policy initiatives have served to advance the *quality* of educator preparation in Texas, **university-based programs have been unable to produce sufficient numbers of teachers to keep pace with the rapidly growing school population in the state.** Overall teacher production rates at Texas universities have remained essentially constant over the past several years.

Recent projections, however, indicate that the need for teachers will increase by 22% through 2006. Special education, the most critical shortage area, will require a 59% increase. These shortages are compounded by high turnover rates among new teachers and competition from Texas' growing high-tech industry for graduates qualified in science, math and technology.

Alternative teacher-certification programs, run primarily through education service centers and larger school districts, have grown significantly and are now major players in addressing the state's teacher supply and demand needs. More recently community colleges in the state have begun to explore and develop methods in which they may deliver teacher-certification programs on their campuses. Despite the advent of these innovative programs, there are still not enough qualified teachers available to staff Texas schools.

These teacher shortages now loom as perhaps the major challenge facing Texas education today. The dramatic educational gains of the past decade, as well as ambitious plans for the ensuing years, are jeopardized if the state cannot come to grips with these education workforce issues. The continued economic viability of the state could be affected by the shortage of teachers. Both employers here and those relocating to Texas must have confidence that the state's educational system will provide them with adequately prepared potential employees.

In this report, the Richardson Forum's Executive Advisory Committee calls for systemic, concerted action by all stakeholders in public education to develop the necessary resources and strategies to solve this problem. **The committee offers some 40 recommendations for engaging the state's business and professional leadership in a constructive effort to**

address the teacher shortage problem in Texas. The report contains the committee's suggestions for key state agencies, university governing boards and their executive officers, university deans and their faculties, public school teachers and administrators, education service centers, foundations, and business leaders. It is the committee's hope that the report will serve to facilitate broader discussion and ultimately stimulate a proactive agenda to further enhance the quality and quantity of teachers for Texas public schools.

Introduction

Texas public schools have made significant gains in the quality and effectiveness of instruction over the past decade. Despite significant growth, increased ethnic diversity, escalating poverty, and pronounced learning differences that have characterized the state's student population during this period, Texas teachers and administrators have consistently increased achievement on standardized examinations.

In addition to improving overall student performance, the achievement gap that has historically existed between African-American, Hispanic, and White students is diminishing. Such positive performance trends by Texas students have, in fact, enabled state policy-makers to systematically increase levels of difficulty of instructional standards and the associated examinations.

Likewise, state lawmakers have instituted more inclusive testing policies, broadening the percentage of Texas students taking the tests. At this writing, the state is yet again engaged in the task of significantly upgrading its assessment and accountability system. In response to Senate Bill 103 passed during the 76th session, the Texas Education Agency is developing the new eleventh-grade exit examination and expanded Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) tests (to include science and social studies content) that coincide with the state's new academic standards, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

The Challenge

To enable present and future generations of students to meet the more rigorous standards, Texas must have a sufficient supply of qualified classroom teachers, whose performance must evidence unprecedented levels of instructional proficiency and effectiveness. It is the contention of the Executive Advisory Committee of the Sid W. Richardson Foundation Forum that public education in Texas will continue to prosper only to the degree that we can ensure *excellent* teachers for *all* Texas schools. This fundamental principle—instructional excellence for all Texas schools—presents formidable economic and organizational challenges for the state. We are convinced, however, that this commitment is Texas' most critical challenge and one that must be given immediate attention by leaders at all levels if we are to ensure continued educational growth.

Teacher Shortages

Texas schools are currently faced with a diminishing supply of classroom teachers. The state is now experiencing serious teacher shortages in such areas as science, math, technology, special education, bilingual education, and foreign languages. As the student population continues to rise in the ensuing decades, these shortages will, no doubt, become more pronounced. Recent projections indicate that the need for teachers will increase by approximately 22% through 2006. (The largest projected demand rate will be for special-education teachers, with the need estimated to grow by 59%.)

Despite increased need, fewer teachers are being prepared in Texas universities. The combined output of the state's 68 educator-preparation programs is estimated at about 15,000 annually, and current enrollment and completion rates fall well short of projected demand. As noted, these shortages are accentuated in the science, mathematics and technology fields, as potential teachers in these areas are readily employed and highly recruited by the state's high-tech sector, with compensation far in excess of the typical teaching salary. Furthermore, it is estimated that about one-third of the teachers prepared by the state's universities never enter the profession at all, choosing other career paths instead.

In addition to low production levels at the university, high turnover rates in the public schools serve to further exacerbate a problem that is rapidly escalating to crisis status. According to recent studies, almost one-third of those teachers who pursue a teaching career leave the profession within their first three years on the job, and as many as one-half will exit the profession within five years. Even dramatic increases in overall teacher production will fall short of achieving excellent teachers for every Texas classroom, unless the state can simultaneously stem the vast tide of teachers leaving the profession.

Thus, much remains to be done to address current deficits in the preparation and retention of teachers. Fortunately for our state, there is a substantial policy and institutional infrastructure in which to build a revitalized teacher-preparation initiative.

Teacher-Preparation Reforms

The first in a series of teacher-preparation "reforms" began in 1986 when Texas instituted certification exams for its newly prepared teachers. Through the Examination for the Certification of Educators in Texas (ExCET), certifying teachers are required to demonstrate proficiency by passing tests addressing both their content knowledge and pedagogical skills.

On the heels of creating this performance-based certification requirement, Texas became the first state in the country to effectively establish teacher preparation as a *university-wide* function, when, in 1987, the Legislature abolished all undergraduate-education degree programs. Senate Bill 994 required secondary teachers to attain their undergraduate degree in their academic discipline, and it required elementary teachers to secure a broad-based interdisciplinary degree. These legislative actions—assessing content and pedagogy along with extending the preparation responsibilities throughout the university—have proven to be important policy constructs in educator preparation. Taken together the two policies clearly establish a leadership role for all academic departments within the university in the production of teachers, and they reinforce the importance of strong content-based preparation.

In 1991 the Legislature provided funding for the development of Centers for Professional Development and Technology. This has been arguably the state's most important policy initiated to underscore the significance of field-based preparation for classroom teachers. These centers have driven significant restructuring efforts within colleges of education and arts and sciences to focus on collaborative, field-based preparation, designed and delivered in partnership with consortia of school districts. Now evident in most university programs in Texas, these centers also sought to ensure that technology-based instructional techniques were properly integrated

into teachers' degree programs. As relatively new organizational structures within colleges of education, the centers afford a solid foundation for PK-16 collaboration, at least as it relates to matters of teacher production. They have also served to reinforce the critical balance between content and pedagogical preparation for effective teaching.

Building on these efforts, state policy-makers began to support the development of alternative teacher-certification programs about 1987. In general, such "alternative" programs recruit professionals with baccalaureate degrees and place them in intensive instructional seminars complemented by supervised "on-the-job" training. These programs have grown significantly, now supplying almost 20% of the state's teachers. Alternative programs have demonstrated clearly that multiple paradigms may be effectively used in the preparation of teachers and that service providers other than the university (such as education service centers, school districts, and private vendors) can contribute significantly in this field of teacher development.

Introduced in 1995, the Accountability System for Educator Preparation (ASEP) is the most recent of these program reform strategies. Closely paralleling the state's successful PK-12 accountability system, the ASEP has added a performance-based dimension to the institution's teacher-production programs. ASEP, of course, represents an important quality-control mechanism for the state's preparation programs, ensuring consistency and effectiveness in achieving the content and pedagogical standards of all teachers. In addition to its value as a quality-management tool, however, ASEP provides a useful frame of reference for university-based faculties, modeling to a degree the high-stakes environment in which the public school teachers must work.

Most recently, the Texas Legislature also funded an important financial incentive to support prospective teachers in the form of the "Teach for Texas" conditional scholarship program. This scholarship/forgivable loan program is a component of the TEXAS grant and is the first major effort since the Texas Educator Loan Program (TELP) of the mid-1980s to establish state-supported financial aid for prospective teachers.

Policy and Program Improvements

State policy has encouraged and in many instances reinforced a broad array of program-improvement initiatives within the state's universities. As shortage issues have become more pronounced, several universities, and even entire systems, have mounted major program efforts designed to increase both the quality and quantity of teachers produced for Texas schools. The best of these efforts has involved close collaboration with public school partners, and examples now abound of serious collaborative work in this area.

The University of Texas at El Paso, for instance, was an early innovator in this area, using its regional collaborative as a prime mechanism for enhancing its teacher-education programs. Likewise, the College of Science at The University of Texas at Austin has developed its own teacher-preparation approach, the UTEACH model, aimed at significantly increasing science teachers.

Among the nine universities associated with The Texas A&M University System, the chancellor and board of regents have worked with institutional CEOs to implement broad-based,

systemic reforms in their teacher-preparation programs through the Regents' Initiative for Excellence in Education. The A&M System's work in this area is being orchestrated with a partnership network of over 200 Texas schools. The Texas State University System and its nine member institutions are establishing system-wide initiatives that incorporate the online delivery of educator-preparation coursework to reach areas of Texas not served by traditional programs, while also expanding its involvement in alternative-certification programs addressing high-demand teacher-shortage areas. Recently, the University of Houston, along with collaborators at Rice, Texas Southern and St. Thomas universities, has announced an important urban teacher-training initiative, with the Houston Independent School District as the major school partner.

All of the policy elements and institutional innovations referenced above certainly create a useful foundation for efforts to increase production and retention of teachers. While representing significant staging points, these efforts are insufficient to realize the monumental goal of achieving instructional excellence for all Texas schools. Significant challenges persist in recruiting promising students into teaching, preparing them in an efficient and effective manner, and retaining them successfully in the profession. Succinctly, there is much more to do than has already been done.

Legislative Considerations

The Richardson Foundation Forum's Executive Advisory Committee has engaged in a careful examination and dialogue of these issues. It is the collective judgment of this committee that if the state is to reap the rewards of a quality educational system, now is the time for state leaders at all levels to seriously embrace the issues surrounding educator preparation and retention.

In this regard, the committee acknowledges the strong interest and important interim work related to these matters already manifested by members of the Texas Legislature. Committee members remain confident that, during the upcoming legislative session, leaders in state government will continue to pursue appropriate fiscal and program policies that can help ameliorate the dual problems of teacher shortages and escalating teacher turnover.

Among the measures that will come before the Texas Legislature, it is the committee's hope that lawmakers will give particular attention to proposals such as the following:

- Expand available scholarship programs, such as the "Teach for Texas" grants, and create additional financial-aid opportunities, such as the Texas Teaching Fellows Program (considered during the last session), to support individuals wishing to pursue teacher certification.

- Provide funds to support targeted school/university partnership programs involving consortia of public schools, community colleges, and universities that will work together to demonstrate measurable increases in student achievement, teacher production, and college admissions rates.

- Modify the state's teacher-salary schedule to support a more flexible, market-driven compensation system for teachers in high-need fields.

- Modify the Texas Teacher Retirement System to enable more veteran educators to join university faculties in full-time educator-preparation assignments.

- Underwrite systematic teacher-mentoring (or induction) programs to enable new teachers to transition effectively into their professional assignments in Texas schools.

Notwithstanding the important work of the Legislature, the committee believes that the principal responsibility for leadership in this area rests with the PK-16 educational community, along with its business and philanthropic partners. It is critical that school and university officials work collaboratively at all levels to marshal the necessary support, define the successful strategies, and aggressively implement improved practices that will result in sufficient numbers of well-prepared teachers for Texas.

To this end, the committee respectfully presents a menu of suggestions for the purposes of advancing this cause. While the list is not intended to be all-inclusive, we offer this as a template to stimulate broader discussion and facilitate concerted, statewide action. It is only through the combined efforts of all the parties listed below that we can ensure that there will indeed be *excellent* teachers for *all* children in *every* Texas school.

Recommendations for Professional Partners

- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

  - Modify funding formulas for educator preparation to support financial incentives for the production of teachers, by increasing existing funding rates for teacher-preparation courses and providing "value-added" production incentives for all university departments engaged in certification of teachers.

  - Develop procedures to enable consistent identification and monitoring of the pre-service teaching "pipeline" in Texas universities, including designating prospective teacher candidates in their freshman and sophomore years.

  - Strengthen the role of community colleges in the production of teachers by enhancing current "field-of-study" options, expanding community college/university partnerships, and working with the State Board for Educator Certification to incorporate community college programs into the Accountability System for Educator Preparation.

  - Provide and coordinate funding from external resources for educational research and policy studies that contributes to increased instructional effectiveness of Texas schools and universities.

- State Board for Educator Certification
  - Continue efforts to "deregulate" the certification process, and emphasize the performance-based aspects of the program-accreditation process.
  - Continue the development of certification examinations, and provide detailed test specifications and practice assessments to support university curriculum alignment efforts.
  - Develop a computer-based, "on-demand" testing program to enable easier access to the ExCET examinations.
  - Create a systematic teacher-induction program to support new teachers moving into the profession.
- University/Community College Governing Boards and Chief Executive Officers
  - Articulate the importance of the university's teacher-preparation function, and reinforce it as a critical, university-wide mission.
  - Actively promote the teaching profession and the university's teacher-preparation mission through a media and editorial campaign.
  - Expand the role of the community college in teacher preparation, and actively engage the community college faculties and partnerships with universities and public schools in teacher-preparation functions.
  - Expand the university reward system to ensure that field-based research, professional development and/or service in public schools are valued components of the tenure and promotion process.
  - Ensure that sufficient financial resources (including faculty salaries) are directed to the teacher-preparation function within the university, and routinely monitor expenditures for this purpose.
  - Actively promote teacher-education scholarships and teacher-education faculty endowments in university capital campaigns.
  - Institute internal management and accountability systems that routinely track and report institutional efforts and outcomes related to educator preparation.
  - Develop joint staffing arrangements among/between universities, community colleges, and school districts to facilitate teacher recruitment, preparation, and retention.

- University/College Deans and Faculty
  - Actively promote university-wide faculty participation in the preparation of teachers, by recruiting outstanding faculty and rewarding them for their work in this critical function.
  - Expand and strengthen the network of professional development schools and partnership schools working with the university to ensure exemplary and supportive sites for the preparation and development of teachers.
  - Actively engage master teachers and administrators in the preparation of teachers by expanding and formalizing "clinical" faculty appointments at the university.
  - Actively recruit bright, capable, service-oriented students to pursue teaching as a career.
  - Ensure that the educator-preparation degree programs include the information contained in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and Examination for the Certification of Educators in Texas (ExCET) standards.
  - Ensure that the academic core curriculum is clearly articulated and appropriately aligned with the state's performance indicators.
  - Develop university-wide mentoring structures that support undergraduate teacher candidates as they advance through the teacher-preparation program, focusing on engaging arts/sciences faculty in this advisory work.
  - Provide extensive research and professional development opportunities for faculties engaged in field-based preparation of educators.
- Public School Administrators and Teachers
  - Actively promote teaching as a worthwhile and meaningful profession with students, colleagues, and community leaders, and provide leadership in recruiting students into the profession.
  - Provide adequate compensation structures, as well as ensuring that work assignments and schedules for new teachers provide them with sufficient support and optimize their opportunity to affect positive student growth.
  - Provide stipends, extra incentive pay and/or other types of compensation to master educators who work with new teachers.

- Encourage more teachers to assume an active professional role in mentoring and coaching new teachers through collaborative induction programs.

- Actively encourage high-need campuses to participate in professional development school programs and other collaborative opportunities with university partners.

- Education Service Centers

  - Actively promote teaching as a worthwhile and meaningful profession with students, colleagues, and community leaders, and collaborate with colleges and universities in their regions to recruit the "best and brightest" into the teaching profession.

  - Collaborate with area universities to provide high-quality professional development that is aligned with the university teaching program and that equips practicing teachers to effectively coach and mentor beginning teachers.

  - Expand high-quality alternative-certification programs that provide teachers for Texas schools, focusing on attracting "non-traditional" students into the profession.

- Foundations

  - Support collaborative planning opportunities involving public school and university educators and other stakeholders at all levels.

  - Support research, development and dissemination projects, such as the Richardson Foundation Forum, that are designed to identify "best practices" related to collaborative educator preparation, and broadly disseminate these practices through conferences, workshops, and publications.

  - Develop a foundation consortium to collaborate on funding opportunities, leverage foundation investments, and share project information to advance educator preparation in the state.

  - Continue to fund promising programs as "pilot" sites for innovation in areas of educator preparation.

  - Use the resources and prestige of the foundation community to enhance the status of educators and the teaching profession at large, and engage the public in a positive and proactive manner through a campaign of public information.

- Businesses and Organizations

  - Invest in teacher scholarships and work-internship programs for prospective teachers.

  - Develop a "teaching-partners" program for teachers in high-need fields, which includes creative compensation bonuses and internships for practicing teachers in the sciences and "high-tech" related fields.

  - Continue to actively promote educational partnerships that combine the efforts of community colleges, universities, and public school systems to produce increased numbers of teachers in their corporate service areas.

  - Support alternative-certification programs that encourage and enable retiring employees to teach in public school settings.

  - Promote job-sharing programs with universities and community colleges to assist in training and preparation of teachers.

  - Use corporate training resources to provide professional development opportunities for classroom teachers, including joint training opportunities with school districts and universities.

  - Use the resources and prestige of the corporate community to enhance the status of educators and the teaching profession at large, and engage the public in a positive and proactive manner through a campaign of public information.

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